



SIERRA CLUB

GREAT LAKES PROGRAM

May 6, 2013

Senate Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes Committee
Michigan State Capitol
Lansing, MI 48933

Re: SB 266

Dear Committee Members:

With all the effort by the state of Michigan to protect the Great Lakes from invasive species, such as Asian Carp, changing Michigan's ballast water standards will be a huge step in the wrong direction. SB 266 will weaken Michigan's current ballast water standards designed to keep new invasive aquatic species out of the Great Lakes. Currently, these standards are some of the strongest in the Great Lakes region protecting a recreational boating and fishing industry worth more than \$7 billion. In fact, Michigan ranks 8th in the nation in numbers of licensed resident and nonresident anglers who contribute \$2 billion annually to the state's economy.

Yet each day, the Great Lakes are damaged by invasive species like the zebra mussel and sea lamprey. Currently there are over 180 types of invasive species. Invasive species have forever changed our use and enjoyment of the Great Lakes, affecting many businesses and industries and just about anyone who wants to visit or use the Lakes.

For example, anglers are left with fewer and smaller sport fish because of invasive species. Zebra and quagga mussels reproduce so quickly and are so efficient at filtering food out of the water that they leave little for small fish to eat. Unfortunately, as the small fish disappear so do the larger sport fish that rely on them for food.

Currently, invasive species cost the Great Lakes region \$5 billion annually. For example, Detroit Edison paid over \$17 million in one year to remove invasive species, such as zebra mussels, from its water intake pipes.

Invasive species are introduced and spread by individuals in a variety of ways, both intentionally and unintentionally. Boaters and anglers unknowingly transport zebra mussels and other invasives in bait wells, engine intakes, on trailers, etc. However, the majority of aquatic invasive species in the Great Lakes entered in the ballast water of ocean-going ships, which exchange their ballast water when they off-load or take on cargo. Many of the region's most problematic invasive species, like the zebra and quagga mussels, entered in ballast water. Restrictions on ocean-going freighters reduce the threat of new invasive species entering the Great Lakes ecosystem.

Preventing new introductions and reducing the spread of invasive species requires that the state use its current ballast water standards. **For these reasons, we urge a NO vote on SB 266. All votes on SB 266 will be included in the Sierra Club's Legislative Scorecard.**

Sincerely,

Melissa Damaschke
Great Lakes Program Director
Sierra Club

2727 Second Avenue, Suite 320
Detroit, Michigan 48201
PHONE (313) 965-0055 * FAX (313) 962-1129

www.sierraclub.org/greatlakes